

*PRICE 10 CENTS*

# **In New York**

**DRAMATIC SCENES  
IN THREE PARTS**

*By*  
**N. I. KOLSKY**



*Published by*  
**N. I. KOLSKY**  
**354 Grove Street, Jersey City, N. J.**



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## FIRST PART

## A STREET SCENE

JOE—A young man.

BILL—A young man.

An old woman

Vegetable Dealer.

FRED, his son.

A Porter, his first day with the V. Dealer.

A Drunkard.

*WINTER 4 A. M.*

*(A street, stores on both sides, BILL comes up on the l. s.)*

BILL—What a bunch of miseries had been heaped on me. It looks as if everybody and everything are against me. Even nature does the same. Are they my enemies? How it is I am a mere ball to be thrown, hurled and tossed with. The worst of all is my relentless stomach, a bitter fierce enemy. No pity no words can ever do, but food fills him up and he'll let you have rest. I wish I could knock them down. *(Strikes the wall with his fists and falls, tries to get up.)* It is harder to get up *(falls again)*. What's the use, I am down.

JOE—*(Comes up L)*. Never mind, you'll get yours all right. Just wait a while. It isn't a very good answer. It is all I have in store. Patience and hope. Yes, the prospects are very good, as the weatherman predicts snow, and if his prophesy comes true, and lots of it, then I am again in the saddle. Oh, yes, patience helps all the time. *(Sees Bill.)* What's that? What's the matter with you, Bill?

BILL—I just feel sick.

JOE—I'll call for an ambulance.

BILL—Please don't do it.

JOE—Then you aren't sick, you must be awful hungry.

Do you know what I think to do? Let us play a trick on the hospital. You keep your present pose, and I'll call for an ambulance. A very good chance to be warmed up, and to get a meal. In case you aren't sick, well, they'll know it.

BILL—I once was in a hospital, and I don't want to go there any more. Just think of it, how it is to be in poor health at a place where you're considered as a poor, undesirable creature. How it is to be under the care and given up to the mercy of one who, whatever he does, you must apologize or be kicked to death.

JOE—Is it as sad as that?

BILL—Yes, it is, to one who has not lost all. Poor he may be, but if he still holds high his honor, then if he gets into such places, where nobody cares for his rights, but is considered and treated like some cheap subject, which the world could dispose of, then, why should you wonder.

OLD WOMAN—(*Comes up*). Such a cold, how can I stand such a cold.

JOE—It isn't so cold as that. You must be very hungry and scantily dressed. That's why it makes you think so.

OLD WOMAN—Yes, it's true. I am nearly mixed up.

JOE—You mustn't expose yourself to useless sufferings and be as despondent as that. Why you could find shelter somewhere, in a charitable institution, for instance.

OLD WOMAN—That's true. But I am trying the best, that the charity officials shouldn't find me. Just a few hours ago I thought of spending a night in a hall under

the stairs. But the damn janitor had seen me and as you know, he told me to move. 'As I didn't, he called a cop. Surely I refused to go with the cop. The cop went to phone for a police wagon. I, in the meantime, was so lucky to sneak away; and I am here, otherwise my place were now in prison. Oh, I am sick of it. You see that's the way it goes.

JOE—Sit down. You're tired walking. But the reason why you don't want to be there? Were it not much better, if you had your warm place, your meals; your life and existence were safer than here. Freedom is a very great ideal, which must be cherished and fought for. But not for an old women like you, too weak to face sufferings and hardships; too weak to be exposed to the cold weather and starvation; too weak to be driven from one place to another. And besides the contempt and derision of well fed and dressed people. My advice to you is, give it up; from now on try to find a resting place for the last years of your life. You're not the right type to stand in the ranks; give it up, you're too weak.

OLD WOMAN—I don't think it important now. It is just a matter of a very short duration. Do you think I'll have to stand many more winters? Certainly not. My life had passed away. I am awaiting with impatience my real end. I do not doubt for a moment that this is the last winter I have to endure. In my youth I always fought for a home. I fought, ha, ha, ha. I slaved. I

slaved as a working girl and slaved as a street girl. Now it's all over, my slaving time has passed away, and my begging time will quickly end. Freedom is not for me? I like it with all its bitterness. Abuses? ha, ha, ha, haven't I been abused as a slave. Oh, yes, all the time and lots of them. As a young girl I used to change places frequently because I couldn't stand the ill-treatment of my employers, and thought about getting rid of this miserable life. At the same time, as if it were by Providence, I had been employed by the best lady, I think, the world ever had, and it's made me forget all my abuses. I worked for her for fifteen years. After a long time of work I felt tired, and decided to rest for a few months. And that's what killed me. I never went to work again. I couldn't. I felt after that I have been treated like a slave, marked like a slave.

JOE—You were?

OLD WOMAN—You know the white badge servant girls wear?

JOE—I never read that slaves were marked with white badges. It's no difference. It is a mark of slavery anyhow, as you felt the abuse.

OLD WOMAN—Oh, yes, I felt it bitterly. I knew it all the time what I really was, but I couldn't help. I stood it very well for many years until once I made up my mind to rest a short while, and that's what killed me. I couldn't go back and take up the old mode of life, and the long working hours. Just think of it, fourteen

hours, no Sundays, no holidays. How can a human being stand all this and not lose his senses?

JOE—You were badly treated too?

OLD WOMAN—Just the opposite; my mistress was a very kind lady, otherwise I couldn't stick fifteen years to the job. She was very kind-hearted. Just think of it. Tom made a sour face and her heart was moved to pity, she shed tears.

JOE—Tom was her only child.

OLD WOMAN—What are you talking about? I mean Tom, the cat.

JOE—Then you ought to have appealed to her for shorter hours; she would certainly have submitted.

OLD WOMAN—I did it. After a few months' rest I went to my old place. I asked her if she would employ me for eight hours' work from now on; she demurred. She said, "Oh, my, oh my, what can I do for you? What a change! You aren't any more the jewel you used be." She advised a few months' more rest. I am resting since. I never went to see her. She liked me because of being a devoted slave; as soon as she heard my demands, as soon as she became aware that in me is hidden some spark of a revolting spirit, she hasn't any use for me. My place was taken by a young, rosy-cheeked country girl. And if that girl will get tired, she'll find another. Oh, yes, that's the way it goes.

JOE—You haven't seen her since.

OLD WOMAN—A few years ago she met me, she spoke

to me. She asked me what I am doing. I am working, I answered. If I told her the truth she would be ashamed to speak to me. I asked her about Tom. You ought to see, she wept like a child. She kept me for an hour telling me all about Tom. How much Tom has changed since I left the place, how he spent his last days. How and how—oh, I cannot remember everything she said. Oh, yes, she told me, too, that I and Tom were the best creatures in the neighborhood, and that she was very sorry for losing both. In spite of it, that her conscience is clear, because of the human treatment she gave us. She was even generous to Tom. She buried him, she gave him a tombstone with his name on it.

JOE—Ha, ha, ha.

OLD WOMAN—Why, Tom was a model cat, and after what sufferings and abuses I had to bear. Now you can imagine how glad I am that all have passed away. I remember everything, and therefore I am happy that I am through with it. I am sure that I'll soon be released of my sufferings. I hope this is the last winter I have to endure. I don't think I'll stand another. For you, my boy, I feel sorry; so young and wrecked. What's the matter with him? Is he sick?

JOE—I think he is, but he refuses to be taken to the hospital.

OLD WOMAN—He was there once.

JOE—That's what he says.

OLD WOMAN—I know it. If one gets it in the neck he

becomes careful. The wise one remembers it all his life time. The fool forgets it quickly. I mean with you, as long as you're young, you can see to it that such trouble shouldn't happen to you again, never forget it.

JOE—It's not my fault why I am here. I am a worker and willing to work, but friendless and penniless. My boss owes me three weeks' wages, but refuses to pay me.

OLD WOMAN—How is that? I never heard of such a case before. Why every boss pays, and must pay. Haven't we judges?

JOE—I haven't believed it myself, but it has happened to me, as I have been employed as porter for a Fifth Avenue Club. The steward, at the time he engaged me and another fellow, lectured us for about half an hour; all about what we are supposed to do. In conclusion he told us again that he wants to see us faithful in our work as soldiers. I hadn't the slightest idea what he meant. After the first day I became aware of it. The other fellow bid him good-bye. I, as I hadn't a single penny, was forced to stick to the job. After three weeks my patience gave way. I quit.

OLD WOMAN—And he didn't pay you?

JOE—He told me that he'll never do it, because I haven't finished the month. A few days ago I went to him for the last time. I gave him my last warning—that in case he wouldn't pay me, I'll be forced to see the magistrate. "You can see him as much as you want to," he said. He laughed. I found after that he was right. I went to the

court and asked the magistrate what to do. As an answer he handed me——

OLD WOMAN—He handed you——

JOE—Not even this. A lawyer's business card.

OLD WOMAN—And what did you then?

JOE—Nothing. I hadn't a single penny and what good will a lawyer do you if you haven't money.

OLD WOMAN—That means, no money, no justice.

JOE—It looks like that.

OLD WOMAN—An exception must be made on behalf of Justice. It's true that you cannot get anything without money, but Justice must be distributed free to everyone.

JOE—Yes, Justice as an institution in the service of humanity.

OLD WOMAN—Ha, ha, ha, just think of it. If you try to rob someone, you get your punishment all right; are you cheated no one helps you, then I must say we haven't such a thing as Justice at all.

JOE—Well.

(VEGETABLE DEALER and FRED coming up R. They meet the newly employed porter waiting at the door.)

V. D.—Great, great, all credit to the new management, a real wonder, such a breakfast. It makes you think of summertime. Don't you think so.

FRED—We must not be so overjoyed, as long as there are human beings who shiver; one is right here.

V. D.—Don't mind him; he'll feel better after bringing out a few bags of potatoes. Work will warm him up.

I don't know ; is it not too cold to put them outside? Oh, no, look there ; if they over there can stand it, the potatoes surely will.

FRED—You told me how you were mistaken once, and a few bags of potatoes froze. Were it not much better if you bought a thermometer and let these poor creatures alone.

V. D.—It's just for fun. I like to see them moving around. I like to see them in groups, and it is my ardent wish that you should study them as I do, and never forget that such people are in existence, who suffer because they're sinners.

FRED—Are you sure of it? Maybe because we're sinners. Don't you think it that they're our handiwork ; we drove them to such terrible conditions. We overworked them ; we made them hate honest labor?

V. D.—Now you said the right word. They hate labor, they like liquor ; and whose fault is it if they're in the gutter. Liquor is the world's poison. Let them eat more and they'll be able to do all the work.

FRED—Daddy, you haven't worked yet, therefore you don't know the meaning of it. You don't know how monotonous hard work eats up a man, turns him into a feelingless machine ; once he tries liquor, which does good as a drug ; but he hasn't the intelligence to realize that if he'll take much of it, it'll kill him. Oh yes, Daddy, all our miseries, all our sufferings, are because we

do not employ intelligence in our dealings (*unlocks the door and goes in with the porter*).

V. D.—Another mistake. I gave him a business education and turned a preacher. (*He sees his son helping the porter.*) What are you doing? You spoil the man, and, besides, I don't want you to do the work which can be done by a porter. I'll tell him all about it, why he might think we're fools. (*Goes in.*)

FRED—Poor Daddy, he feels sorry because I have turned an Idealist. Not a bit. I am my father's son. I tried only to initiate him with the sad fact that we're poor devils. To tell him or to show him the books. No, no, it'll kill him, he wouldn't be able to stand the blow. (*Goes in.*)

V. D. (*Coming out with the porter*). I don't blame you. It's your first day. After this you'll know that all the porter's work must be done by the porter. (*Porter goes in.*) All my dreams had vanished. I thought a good deal about his future. I tried the best I could to give him the right education, but he turned a dreamer. To get him back in the right track it'll be hard work, but I must do it. First I must clean this place of the undesirables, that lovely group makes him think a good deal. Yes, this must be done, my first message to them—a few frozen potatoes? No, they might think we're fools, or we do it for the purpose of keeping up prices—a stone! (*Picks up one and throws.*)

JOE—Oh! (*collapses,—the O. W. and Bill out*).

FRED—(*Coming out*). What have you done, Pa?

V. D.—I just tried my skill, don't mind them.

FRED—Why Pa, you had better had tried on me, because I am poorer than they over there.

V. D.—Why are you trying to tease me. How good I have been to you all the time, and, besides, let me tell you, you're the funniest Idealist I have ever seen. If you think that they over there are worth taking into consideration, and you want to avenge their wrongs, do it with the same size stone; but don't throw cannon balls at your old man.

FRED—I couldn't help telling the truth; that we are poor is a fact.

V. D.—You needn't tell me that; that we're poor is a fact. I know it better myself than you do. You just heard me telling about our riches and greatness of the good old time. And it is sad to have been landed as a potato dealer. But let me tell you that if we'll come to deal with potato peel, I'll never droop like you do. Keep your head high, that must be the motto.

FRED—You mustn't worry about me at all. I know it very well that as long as we have the stuff which makes us keep our heads high, we'll surely do it; but we mustn't forget that there are people who haven't.

V. D.—You're again with your people? You cannot do anything; it is a custom which exists for ages; that the fallen man is trampled and exploited by the man who has brains.

FRED—Rich people may have brains. But they have not a dose of what we call common sense. Do you find wisdom in a man saying: "I'll kick you today, and you'll kick me tomorrow."

V. D.—Certainly not.

FRED—That's with the rich. They know it very well that their riches and happiness are not everlasting, and in the end they'll get measure for measure.

V. D.—If the rich people haven't sense, who else has it, your poor fools over there?

FRED—I don't think about the inhabitants of the slums. The slum to me is like a living graveyard, a very bad place, where to study human nature and conditions. Try to study them while they're still in our midst. Listen to their demands; consider their protests, and you'll come to the conclusion that they're human beings fighting for better conditions.

V. D.—They have sense! Not a bit. They protest? No, they balk in horses' manner. They want more food and less work. How will they ever get it; they must work it out themselves.

FRED—You cannot apply the same means to have them move on.

V. D.—We do. The whip of starvation puts them to work again.

FRED—How can we apply it to our brothers and sisters.

V. D.—Who? The mob? I don't want them in our family.

FRED—You're not to be asked on that account. It is in the power of fate alone to decide. Don't you think it that on our way going down we may be forced to share their sorrows?

V. D.—No, it'll never be; you're well prepared for better work, in case you'll be forced to work for a living.

FRED—Should the horse hitched to the carriage forget his fellow hitched to the truck?

V. D.—Yes, he must, or he wouldn't enjoy his position, and by looking sad he'll lose his easy job, and let me tell you, no matter what happens, I am prepared, for it will only break my heart to see you in a fancy harness. I am used to that rapid coming down. I remember the time when we were driven out from our Gibraltar as your Grandpa used to call our palace, to less and less fortified places; now we live in a hut with a flimsy roof on it, which by the slightest change in weather, may be ripped off; and let me tell you, boy, that in case that roof flies, I'll hold to my ideas without a roof over my head.

FRED—I am proud of you, Father.

V. D.—You see, kid, you could avoid the whole debate by showing me the books. Do you think I am afraid?

FRED—Go in and look up.

V. D.—I'll go, I'll go (*taking up courage*) and besides, I am curious for the first time to take a look at Mrs. Poverty. (*The O. W. crosses the street in background.*)

Oh, she must be an old litigious, venomous, weeping, and cursing creature. Oh! (*collapses and dies, Fred tries to bring him in but finds him too heavy*).

FRED—I think I'll go too. (*Goes in, a pistol shot is heard.*)

A DRUNKARD—(*Comes in L; stumbles over Joe's body*). Have another drink, it'll fix you up. (*Out.*)

PORTER—(*Comes out.*) It's the old man (*picks his pocket*). Like real millionaires, none of them has small change. (*Out.*)

OLD WOMAN—(*To be heard in the distance*). One runs, another falls or dies. I stand everything. Am I as strong as that? Perhaps I may endure another winter. (*She weeps.*)

CURTAIN.

## SECOND PART

NURSE—Male.

NURSE—Female.

JOE.

A DYING MAN.

*From Hospital Scenes witnessed by the  
Author in a New York City Hospital.*

(N. M. and N. FEMALE are putting up a screen around a dying man's bed.)

N. M.—While he is packing up his things for his long trip, we'll have a little chat.

N. F.—The idea; haven't you plenty of time all day long? Why it is our duty to comfort the sick while dying.

N. M.—Therefore I say we should comfort him by letting him die.

N. F.—We must do our duty.

N. M.—Don't talk foolish. Why I hadn't had the opportunity to put my arms around you for a century. (*Tries to embrace her.*)

N. F.—Go to hell. The idea! you never ask my permission; you treat me as if I were a cheap thing.

N. M.—You know I hate long speeches. I don't know anything about them. I am a plain and simple man. That I love you I told you many times; you don't believe it. Why? I wish I could tell you more but I cannot. And what good will so much speaking do you. Is it not better my plain and sincere words "I love you" than all the prattle of some liar.

N. F.—You mean it.

N. M.—Certainly.

N. F.—And if you dislike me after?

N. M.—Then you'll have the full right to call me a liar.

N. F.—Then I love you too. (*They embrace each other; after they discover that their patient died in the meantime, they pull the blanket over his face, they part in different directions.*)

JOE—(*Comes in with a cup of water, accidentally spilling some on the floor.*)

N. F.—You ought to know that we have to wipe it up.

JOE—It's my shaky hand. I cannot help it now.

N. F.—The kind of an answer! As if I were a—(*aside*) a good chance to try my lover if he really loves me (*to the coming-in N. M.*) What do you think about it, he spilled water on the floor and, besides, he gave me back talk.

N. M.—Don't mind him; sick people are cranky, you know.

N. F.—He almost abused me.

N. M.—He did! That's different. Say, why did you spill the water on the floor?

JOE—I already explained it to the lady.

N. M.—You call it explanation. You abused her; you gave her back talk.

JOE—Oh, no. I just told her that I did it unwillingly.

N. M.—That's all you did; you ought to apologize; you ought to know that the lady is not your equal. You, you, we picked you out of the gutter, but you don't know how to appreciate it, you, you.

JOE—My last means to make you keep quiet (*he knocks him down*).

N. F.—What was it?

N. M.—It was a knockout blow.

N. F.—What do you mean by it?

N. M.—I mean a knock-down blow. He gave me a blow which knocked me down.

N. F.—Don't talk like that. Why you just——

N. M.—If you want to have it that way all right. Have your own way. You see you can never tell; some sick man may be strong for a moment. And it is nothing to be ashamed of.

N. F.—I think that man's crazy, and ought to be put in the lunatic asylum, or he'll repeat it.

N. M.—And, besides, he can denounce us before that new doctor with his crooked ideas; then we're lost.

N. F.—We'll put him in a strait jacket and everything will be forgotten (*he calls in a few men and, after a hard struggle, they gain control over him*).

N. M.—Are we safe now? He can still speak and tell all to that new doctor.

N. F.—We'll hide him somewhere for a short time, then it'll be all forgotten (*they move out the bed*).

N. M.—(*Moving*). (*To himself*). This is the first act of my romance. If the following are as bad, I think I'll make it the last.

N. F.—(*To herself*). Is it worth the whole trouble, just to make a liar out of a fool.

CURTAIN



## THIRD PART

FIRST FIREMAN.

SECOND FIREMAN.

JOE, as a coalpasser.

A BOILER-ROOM SCENE.

A DAY AFTER ELECTION.

FIRST FIREMAN—Ha, ha, ha, (*continuously*). In my dream last night I was transformed into a shovel.

SECOND FIREMAN—If it were only a dream.

FIRST FIREMAN—You don't mean to say that I am a shovel?

SECOND FIREMAN—I should say not; we don't look like shovels. But our function is the same; we're the living part of the dead shovel. Our work is nothing else but shoveling coal, and if I say that we are just shovels, why should it surprise you?

FIRST FIREMAN—You forget that we demonstrated yesterday that we're the people, and the majority of the people rule. Shovels will never do such a thing.

SECOND FIREMAN—That's what I told you before. We're living things; we can move from one place to another; we can do different tricks; we can vote. But did we ever think about voting; did we ever demonstrate that we properly understand the Constitution? Never.

FIRST FIREMAN—It's Joe's work, that bookworm. I'll bet you any amount that you'll find him now on the coal bin with a book. He's a nice fellow, but the books; they'll put him on the wrong path. And what's the use; he wants to see us reformed, but how? I don't know.

SECOND FIREMAN—It's very simple. We should live under the system of democracy.

FIRST FIREMAN—Aren't we all Democrats?

SECOND FIREMAN—We just have the name.

FIRST FIREMAN—Why every man has a right to vote and to exercise his own will.

SECOND FIREMAN—We don't do it. The majority sell their votes. One takes money, another a smile. Now let us reason together. What have we now of all our rights? You know very well that before election they promise us everything. And what after election?

FIRST FIREMAN—What do you think to do?

SECOND FIREMAN—It isn't in my power to do anything. I just feel sorry for my people; that they don't want to realize such a simple but great thing; that instead of preserving their suffrage rights for themselves, they sell it to a few individuals. And for what? For a few pennies. I'll bet you the few dollars you got you have already spent.

FIRST FIREMAN—That's true; and you didn't get anything?

SECOND FIREMAN—A cigar.

FIRST FIREMAN—And you smoked it?

SECOND FIREMAN—Certainly not. I kept it to make someone a present, but no, here is the place. (*Opens the boiler door and throws in.*)

FIRST FIREMAN—Foolish, you better had smoked it.

SECOND FIREMAN—No, it had been gotten in a treacherous way.

FIRST FIREMAN—You don't mean to say that I am a traitor.

SECOND FIREMAN—Sit down.

FIRST FIREMAN—I am ready to do anything in my power for the welfare of my country.

SECOND FIREMAN—Sit down, don't get wild. We are more or less traitors unconsciously. You never thought about this, that's why it looks to you so strange and makes you excited. You know that our Constitution is based on democracy. It means a government by the people.

FIRST FIREMAN—Yes, why every kid knows it.

SECOND FIREMAN—Now if you, for instance, pay homage to a foreign ruler or to an American individual who opposes it, that we should live under such a system, what would you be?

FIRST FIREMAN—A traitor, I ought to be. . . .

SECOND FIREMAN—Now you see, if you take money, drinks, music, fireworks, speeches, printed hand bills which are furnished by a few individuals, don't you know that you're a——

FIRST FIREMAN—Yes, yes, but I don't see how you and Joe combined can do anything. You wouldn't knock on every door in the country (*yawns to himself*)—too many drinks last night. If it wasn't a touch of too much. (*Falls asleep.*)

JOE—(*Coming in with coal*). How looks it after election? One looks like a dethroned ruler and the other a peach as a sleepy ruler. And what does the boiler say (*looks up*). Oh, terrible. Awake you Americans, awake!

(All) Open the doors, the dampers. The heat goes down; now we're safe.

FIRST FIREMAN—Say, listen, didn't you call "awake Americans?"

JOE—Yes.

FIRST FIREMAN—Are you under the impression that all the Americans are in danger?

JOE—Yes.

FIRST FIREMAN—And what shall we do?

JOE—We must hold up our rights for ourselves.

FIRST FIREMAN—But what can we do, we cannot knock on every American's door.

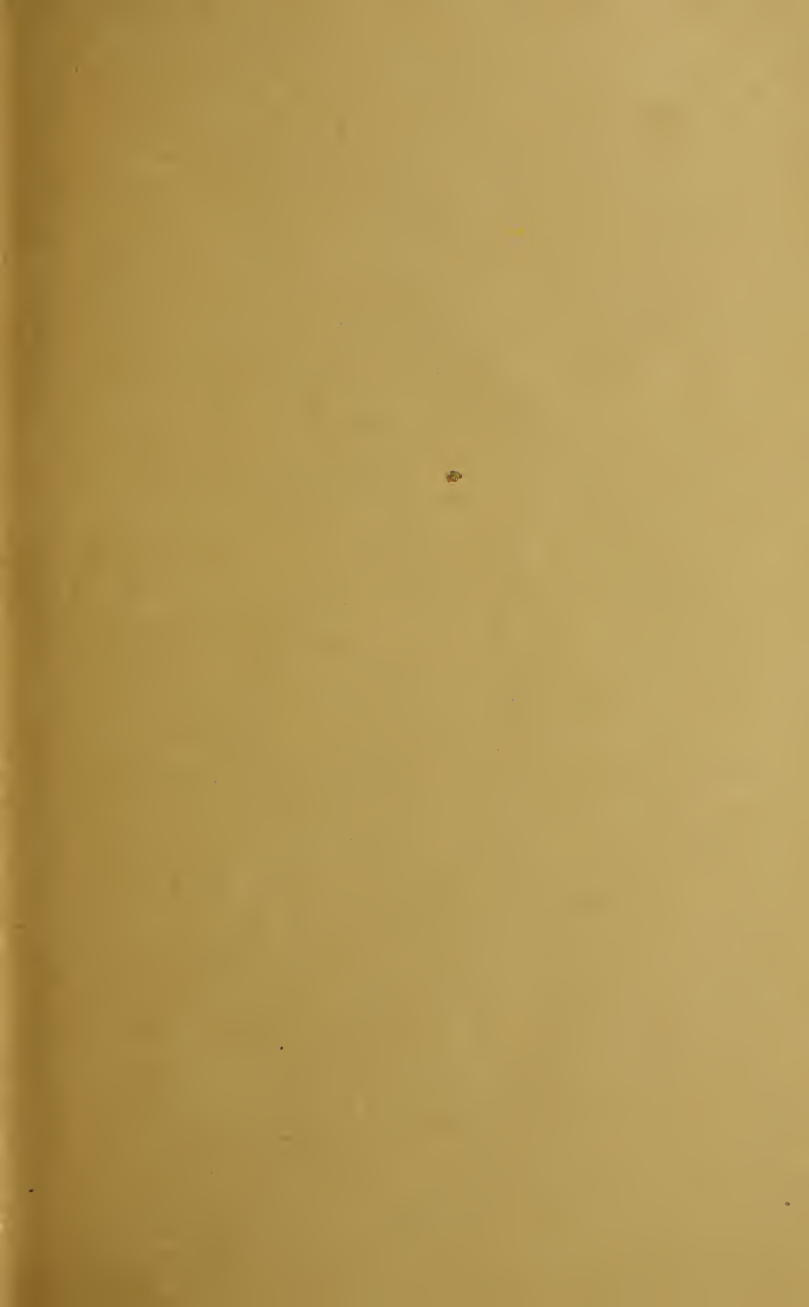
JOE—You can do it on your own door.

FIRST FIREMAN—What! Yes! and I will! (*Both shake hands with Joe.*)

CURTAIN







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